



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

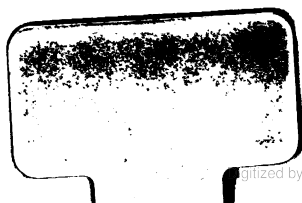
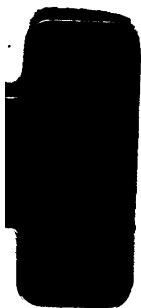
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



d. Don.
Mrs O'Brien
R8 L

CHRIST'S ~~INTERPRETATION~~ OF HUMAN
CALAMITY.

A S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

THE FOUNDLING CHAPEL, OCT. 7, 1857,

ON OCCASION OF

The General Fast.

BY

J. W. GLEADALL, M.A.

FELLOW OF CATHERINE HALL, CAMBRIDGE, MORNING PREACHER AT THE
FOUNDLING, AND LECTURER OF ST. MARY-AT-HILL.

Published by Request.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

G. J. PALMER, 27, LAMB'S CONDUIT STREET.

1857.

246162.2.5.

LONDON :
G. J. PALMER, 27, LAMB'S CONDUIT STREET.

A SERMON.

LUKE xiii. 4.

Those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

THIS day has been appointed by Her Majesty as a day for special services of contrition and devotion, and of supplication to Almighty God for the pardon of sin, and for help, strength, and guidance under one of the direst calamities that ever befel a nation. May our hearts be duly impressed with the importance of the occasion, and tuned to the pitch of its serious and solemn requirements, while a nation prostrates itself humbly before God.

Events have recently taken place, and are still pursuing their course on the other side of the globe, which just now occupy all minds, and distress and rend a thousand hearts; events which have taken us by surprise, which have sprung up suddenly out of the earth, as it were by magic, which have come upon us from a quarter we never

B.

suspected, and whose extent and magnitude and attendant horrors surpass all we could have imagined—much less have believed. The blow has been struck by hands ourselves had trained to war, and by fingers ourselves had taught to fight. It came from those in whom we had reposed a blind undoubting confidence, and who had been treated with a gentleness—with a care and consideration for their welfare—with an attention to their caprices and their prejudices, you would hardly extend to a favourite child, much less to a paid dependent. Out of doubt, when the Psalmist said, “Put not your trust in princes,” he did well to add, “nor in any child of man;” for, of a truth, the annals of moral turpitude can hardly furnish such an instance of baseness, treachery, deceit, and violation of trust as that just now exhibited by the native Indian soldier.

The startling intelligence of the Bengal mutinies flashed upon the country but a few days after the centenary of the battle of Plassy, when the foundation was laid of England's empire in the E. s. What a marvellous history those hundred years unfold, of possessions extended and dominion consolidated! If any idea of danger to those possessions and to that dominion ever crossed the mind, it originated not from causes lying within, but from causes lying without; not from plotting brains at home, but from grasping hands abroad; not from internal disaffection, but from external

ambition—the fierce energies of a First Napoleon, or the secret intrigues of a Russian Emperor. The imbecility and degeneracy of Hindu and Mahometan princes could not cope with British policy and British power: the masses of the population were satisfied—were peaceably disposed—in fact, were safer and happier under British rule than under any other, and no danger was to be apprehended from them: and though the Sepoy had, at times, and here and there, exhibited a spirit of insubordination, yet the conception of such a mutiny as this—so skilfully planned, so extensively ramified, so secretly diffused, so completely absorbing and comprehensive in its grasp—never for a moment entered the thoughts. But such a mutiny has taken place. It burst suddenly and unexpectedly like a thunder cloud, upon the devoted land; or, like a thief in the night, creeping stealthily upon the sleeping and the unprepared.

We can but barely touch upon the fiendish atrocities that have hitherto marked its progress—God grant they may now have closed; upon the nameless deeds of horror that have been perpetrated—scenes that freeze the blood, or, rather, that stir it into phrenzy; scenes, many of them, which never can be known, which the imagination refuses to contemplate and the pen to write;—the innocent, the fair, the helpless, the softly-nurtured—the sucking child, the maiden, the wife, the mother, fallen under the power of worse than demons, and sub-

jected to treatment which the thoughts cannot dwell upon. I can do no more than just touch upon these scenes. The public papers contain ample records of them, and with them all who read the papers are familiar. With what heart-piercing emotions must they have read these reports who have friends and relatives in India—a daughter or a son, a husband or a brother; what grief for those who have suffered, what anxiety for those who survive, what distress for those whose fate is uncertain! And they who have no personal relations with India and no connections there, with what mingled sentiments of boiling indignation and melting sympathy—indignation at the perpetrators of these horrors, sympathy with those upon whom the horrors are inflicted—do they read over these accounts! But I leave them; neither do I refer to the causes of them, political or otherwise. The question is, in what light are they to be viewed, in relation, I mean, to the services of the day?

Now, they have been called a judgment of the Almighty.

There are various senses in which the word judgment is to be understood: two of those senses will answer our present purpose. Judgment is sometimes used to signify God's dealings with man—His providential dispensations—the events which transpire in the course of His providence. In this sense it is used by the Psalmist when he says, Thy judgments are a great deep; that is, thy providen-

tial dispensations are profound—unfathomable and mysterious. The other sense is that of retribution, punishment, chastisement. In this latter sense the word is now generally used. When we speak of a judgment of God—a judgment upon a person or upon a nation, we mean retribution, chastisement, or punishment;—signal punishment for some signal crime or flagrant sin.

Of course, with reference to the first sense there can be no dispute. God's providence ruleth over all; and the events, in whatever aspect—dark or bright—they may appear to us, which mark the course of human affairs, are, both in their origin, progress, and issues, under His control, and at His good and wise disposal.

But with respect to the second sense of the word *judgment*, that of punishment or chastisement, how far and to what extent, and with how much force and how much propriety, it is applicable to the disastrous events now before us, is a question at which, I think, it becomes us to pause and hesitate before we give an answer; otherwise, we may perchance pronounce a rash, foolish, and presumptuous opinion.

It is very easy to call a calamity, personal or national, a judgment. We may suppose that we have settled the whole question and solved the whole difficulty respecting it, by so denominating it; and we may repose on the decision with a kind of ignorant, placid, self-satisfied, or superstitious acqui-

escence, and convert it into a plea for inactivity—for not exerting ourselves—for doing nothing, in short, towards mitigating the evil; for, out of doubt, if every calamity we encounter is a judgment of God, our business is to kiss the rod and not resist it. There are some who never witness an evil or affliction of any kind befalling their neighbours, or even themselves, without instantly declaring it to be a judgment of the Almighty. If a child is taken away, it is a judgment. If a parent dies and leaves a family in distress, it is a judgment. If property is lost, it is a judgment. The storm sinks the ship at sea, or the hurricane sweeps away man's habitation on land, it is a judgment. Not a mishap, not an accident, not a misfortune of any description, ever happens to any body, but it is a judgment. These people hardly ever think of God except as chastising, as wielding the rod, as dealing out judgments; and it is quite possible to confound such a cast and temper of mind with piety. I must confess I cannot see any indications of a rational piety in views like these; nor any just, reasonable, or scriptural conceptions of God's government, or a due acknowledgment of, or acceptable submission to that government, in habits and dispositions like these. Genuine piety is not based upon fallacies and delusions: truth and rectitude lie at the bottom of what is acceptable to God.

And yet the propensity to construe every cala-

mity into a judgment is very old and very prevalent. The Jews in the time of our Lord showed it. Some came and told Him that Pilate had slaughtered certain Galileans, and mingled their blood with the blood of the sacrifices ; and the narrative leads us to conclude that they looked upon the event as a judgment of God upon those Galileans, and asked, what had they been doing to merit a judgment like this ? Christ gave them to understand that they misinterpreted the event, and entirely mistook its nature and meaning when they called it a judgment. Those Galileans, He said, were not sinners above other men ; and therefore the idea that Pilate's wanton barbarity was a judgment upon them, was unauthorized, and had no warranty in reason or religion.

And when the tower of Siloam fell and killed eighteen persons, they said, Behold ! what a judgment—is not this a judgment ? and they asked, what sins had these eighteen been guilty of that God should cast the tower upon them and slay them ? Our Lord rectified their misconceptions about the event : the eighteen, He said, were not extraordinary sinners—their sins had nothing to do with the fall of the tower—it was not a judgment—it was a calamity, from which even the innocent are not exempt.

And again : when they came to Him and questioned Him about the blind man, taking for granted that his blindness was a judgment, they desired to

know whether it was for his own sin or the sin of his parents that God had visited him with this mark of His displeasure. Christ told them that neither his sin nor the sin of his parents was the occasion of the infliction; that it was not a judgment from heaven—not a mark of God's displeasure; on the contrary, it was intended to be an occasion of glorifying God—of manifesting His power, goodness, and wonderful works.

O blessed Spirit of the Great Teacher, who, amid innumerable other sources of benediction, whose streams flow on and bless the world, and will flow on and diffuse their blessings to the utmost limits of nature and of time, has taught us the true interpretation of human calamity and human suffering!

It was natural perhaps for the Jews, trained in the school of Moses and the high priests, and giving but little attention to the more spiritual and evangelical teaching of the prophets, to look upon God in the stern part of His character, as always wielding the rod. It was the old legal idea of God clothed in the garments of wrath, with the book of the law in one hand and the sword of vengeance in the other. Every affliction that befel mankind was therefore viewed as a judgment of God and an indication of His anger. And what were likely to be the moral consequences of a religious theory of this description? With such impressions and ideas as to the meaning and purpose of human sufferings, compassion for those sufferings was, of course,

a false sentiment, and attempts to relieve them an unwarrantable interference with the course of divine justice. The sufferers were regarded as having the curse of God upon them—as victims of His wrath, as marked with the visible tokens of His displeasure.

But Christ has taught us a higher, a better, a more divine lesson. He has taught us that though the justice of God will often, in this world, pursue and overtake great and glaring offenders, whether individuals or communities, we are not on that account to construe every affliction we or others suffer into a judgment. He has consecrated human sorrows, and lifted them out of the degraded and debasing level of mere chastisements, and clothed them with a dignity, an elevation, and a nobility of meaning, which gives us to understand, not only that we may still be objects of God's favour—of His ever watchful care and love, although sorrow may be our allotted portion; but that we best imitate His example who went about doing good, when we cultivate sentiments of compassion for the sorrows of others, and do our best to relieve and mitigate them, however they may have originated; that the sorrows both of ourselves and others, instead of being always interpreted into marks of God's displeasure, may, like the blindness of the man in the Gospel, be converted into occasions of glorifying God, and of beneficially impressing our

own moral nature, by stirring us up to works of piety, patience, courage, and beneficence.

Taught by Christ, therefore, we put a higher interpretation on human afflictions : though coming in the course of God's providence we do not always regard them as God's judgments. A fire breaks out, and human beings and their possessions are lost in the conflagration ; happening whether by accident or of set purpose, we do not call it a judgment. The boat sinks, or the house falls, you are overwhelmed by the waters, or smothered under the ruins. A vessel founders on the broad Atlantic, and hundreds are lost ; a train upsets, many are maimed and some are killed. We do not call them judgments. The wicked combine to deprive you of your property, or conspire to take away your life ; they enter your dwelling in the dead of night and murder a whole family. Is it a judgment ? We call it a calamity, with respect to the sufferers ; a crime, with respect to the perpetrators ; and we say the just judgment of God is manifested when the perpetrators receive the due reward of their deeds.

I feel assured that God governs the world ; I do not entertain the shadow of a doubt of His providential superintendence ; I know that the wicked are under His power, and that for their evil deeds He will call the wicked to account. But because God governs the world, because the wicked are

within His grasp, am I therefore to conclude that every act of atrocity which the wicked commit is a judgment from heaven? I am authorised to say that such acts are violations of the divine law; I feel within me that they are calculated to rouse in human breasts every sentiment of disgust and horror; I learn from the inspired volume that God regards them with frowning indignation, and I am taught to believe that the justice of heaven will sooner or later overtake them. But where is my authority for putting them down as judgments? Christ has taught me, in the case of Pilate and the Galileans, already referred to, that I am not to consider every deed of cruelty and blood which the wicked, in the hour of their ascendancy, may perpetrate, as a judgment of God upon the sufferers.

Out of doubt the wicked are sometimes a rod in the hand of the Almighty. He uses them to chastise communities and nations, uses them as instruments of His justice. But if we, ignorant and short-sighted as we are, pretend to say *when, where, and how far*, I think we trench upon the confines of mysterious ground, enter where we have no warranty of reason or Scripture for going, and venture where angels do not dare to tread.

I do not, therefore, feel myself at liberty to pronounce whether, or how far, these calamities in India are a judgment from heaven. I cannot undertake to wield the thunderbolts of the Omnipotent. I must pause and hesitate before I view this

affliction in the light of a judgment. Let us wait till the awful tragedy is concluded, till the last act is wound up, and the catastrophe is before us, and then we shall be in a better position for deciding where the blow of everlasting justice has fallen.

When, by the intrigues of Jezebel, Naboth was slain, and his vineyard seized, those of that day who delighted in tracing the judgment of God in every human affliction would say, Behold ! what a judgment has come upon the family of Naboth ! What wickedness have they been guilty of to merit a chastisement like this ! And till the bloody drama was finished the transaction might possibly have been viewed in that light. But when, according to the word of the Lord by the prophet Elijah, the plotters and participators in that deed of cruelty and plunder met their retribution, when Ahab and Jezebel fell, the one at Ramoth Gilead, the other in the street of Jezreel, and when dogs licked up their blood, it was then seen how and where God's judgment had fallen.

But if I hesitate to pronounce this Indian calamity a judgment, there are other lights in which it may be viewed, about which there need be no hesitation. Two will serve our purpose ; that of trial and that of warning.

I. Is it not a trial, testing men's patience and fortitude, their confidence in God, and their trust in His providential rule ?

We shed tears of sympathy for those who are

now bleeding, and suffering, and dying to protect our position in India. But what a trial it is for them ! May the Almighty God be about them in this their hour of danger. And may we remember what they are now passing through to maintain the honour and power of this our country ; and may the recollection stimulate us to generous warmth of heart and liberality of hand, and induce us to contribute bountifully towards supplying the wants of those who have lost their all in the struggle.

It would seem to be a law of providence that all great results shall be secured by the labours, sufferings, and sacrifices of the brave and the magnanimous. What pain and privation He went through, the greatest of human benefactors, and the greatest of sufferers, the Son of God ! Contemplate the progress of man in every age and nation, and you will see that it has been wrought out by trial, toil, and danger. Read the history of our own country, and see what glorious efforts the cause of freedom and humanity has called forth. What intrepid defenders have gathered round that cause, and what a precious legacy has been bequeathed to us from the sufferings and trials of the past ! It would seem to be God's arrangement that good of whatever kind, whether for individuals or for nations, shall be secured by endurance, by strenuous effort, by self-sacrifice ; the way to it lies through toil, often through tribulation. Trial and struggle are the true enchanter's wand ; the true interpretation

of the fabled philosopher's stone, which turned what it touched into gold.

May those bands of the brave—of both sexes—now scattered over the northern provinces of India, who are standing with their bodies in the gap and holding in check this wide-spread insurrection, have fortitude to sustain the trial, and strength to bear the struggle. That the trial and the struggle will be successful, that they will issue in results conducive to the welfare both of India and of England, we do not entertain a doubt. But whether this be so or not, the brave, calm, patient, strenuous band by whom they are borne, will bequeath a bright example to whoever shall come after them, will win the profound sympathy of all who shall hereafter read their story, and embalm themselves in the enduring gratitude and undying recollection of their country. Let us supplicate for them the favour and protection of *Him* who can breathe unto them the spirit to do and to suffer, and who can, and who will, we trust, in His own good time, deliver them from the hour and the place of their peril.

II. But once more:—these calamities utter a voice of warning; and if England means to profit by the visitation, and out of doubt it is the intention of heaven she should profit by it, she must not turn a deaf ear to, or misconstrue, the lesson.

If God has suffered England to plant the standards of her power in India, if God has given her

sovereign authority there, it is for some high and righteous purpose ; it is that she may be the messenger of good to the nations of the East, that she may carry and diffuse among millions of the ignorant and the prostrate the light of truth, the blessings of civilization, the faith and the hopes of a pure and undefiled religion. Has she understood her mission, and has she been true to it? I believe that her authority in India has been the source of many benefits to the masses of the people, inasmuch as it has thrown the shield of protection over them from the cruelties and oppression of their own rulers, and extended to them greater security for life and property than they heretofore possessed. It is impossible to come to any other conclusion after having read the history of India before the establishment of British rule. What is that history but a record of invasions, plots, intrigues, assassinations ; cities burnt, temples destroyed, the fairest regions of the earth laid waste by fire and sword, and atrocities perpetrated upon the defenceless inhabitants, of which these we now deplore are but a repetition ?

But has not England made the love of money too much her ruling principle there? Let her learn a holier lesson from this dispensation. Let her learn wisdom and moderation, vigilance and forethought ; let her duly consider the designs of Providence in clothing her with so vast a power, and appreciate the great responsibilities which the

possession of that power involves. Let her comprehend the grandeur of her position, and of the manifest destinies which heaven is pointing her to, and let her rise up to the full elevation of the high duties belonging to such a position, and to such destinies. Let her do this ; and then, by the blessing of God, these terrible calamities, with all the nameless horrors belonging to them, which we pray God may now have ceased, may be made the starting point of a nobler career, and open out a brighter future both for India and for ourselves.

LONDON :

Printed by G. J. PALMER, 27, Lamb's Conduit Street.

